

CONCEPTUAL FILIATIONS

SOPHIE BÉLAIR CLÉMENT
THÉRÈSE MASTROIACOVO
DAMIAN MOPPETT
DANIEL OLSON
PAVEL PAVLOV
CHARLES STANKIEVECH
CHIH-CHIEN WANG

CURATOR: MICHELE THÉRIAULT



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In the past 10 years there has been an unprecedented resurgence of the conceptual in art. It is not so much that it spells the triumph of Conceptual art (from the mid 1960s to the early to mid 1970s) over other art movements, for today's exploded discourse of art's relationship to life and the public sphere, intermingled with the ferocious and frenetic forces of the market, render such a proposition meaningless. Rather, it demonstrates both the resilience and versatility of Conceptualism's tactics and its capacity for inhabiting (and being inhabited by) a diversity of artistic practices—some paradoxically 'unconceptual'—that incites one to return to and rethink the original instance and the work it produced. A number of critics and historians have done exactly this in books and commentaries that attempt to track its legacy and rethink its objectives. That so many artworks incorporate conceptualist elements and approaches today is somewhat paradoxical given the failure of some aspects of Conceptual art's program, namely its inability to reach a wider lay audience and to effectively transform the institutional apparatus of art. Nevertheless, that form of art along with the more loosely constituted and immaterial activities of Fluxus in the 60s and 70s questioned the institutional apparatus of art in an unprecedented way and offered alternative structures for its existence in society. It also unsettled the hegemony of visuality opening up the field to non optical forms of art.

There are many reasons that can explain why so many artists are embracing Conceptualism today or at least some of its strategies. Among them is the indisputable criticality at the heart of Conceptual art. The demands it made on conventional notions of authorship, reception and objecthood have given it a particular status in the art world and caused many artists to want to work off it, to emulate it or work against it. Its use of information-based material before information technologies had totally permeated our lives has created a

WAYS OF THINKING

Ways of Thinking is designed for anyone interested in exploring contemporary art and its exhibition framework. It offers succinct and synthesized information on the exhibition's concept, the artists and the works featured. For the complete version of *Ways of Thinking* that includes bibliographic references, please see our website: www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/

referential framework of great appeal to artists seeking ways to make 'work' in an economy of immaterial labor. Another, but by no means last point of interest, is its economy of means that has conferred upon it great adaptability—its ability through an apparently simple apparatus, process or action to unfold underlying complexities.

Of course, nothing comes back in the same form and Conceptualism is a much broader and varied category than the historical instance of Conceptual art. In fact, the inclusiveness of the former, inflected as it now is with feminism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, the relational, the new temporality of the cinematic and the sonorous has had a beneficial effect on the rethinking of the latter, opening up the borders of its exclusiveness. This opening also traverses all the pieces presented in *Conceptual Filiations*, all of which work 'with' Conceptualism. In many cases these artworks reference directly, in the form of an apparent remake (Clément / Michael Snow; Mastroiacovo / William Wegman, Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham, Mel Bochner; Olson / David Askevold; Stankievech / Bruce Nauman,) or indirectly (Pavlov / Nauman) or by quoting (Moppett / Michael Asher, Ed Ruscha) an earlier concept or process based work. Some have no such connections such as Olson, Stankievech and Wang but are nevertheless situated in that lineage. Finally, Moppett inserts direct quotes in an ensemble that appears to negate the basic principles that governed the quoted works' realization.

The reinvestment, the quoting and the allusions that are taking place in *Conceptual Filiations* point to the enduring effectiveness of the conceptual mode in exposing basic problematics in art. But a closer look also reveals contradictions, deviations or mutations of the conceptual that form a basis for new critical possibilities.

– Michèle Thériault

SOPHIE BÉLAIR CLÉMENT

In a performative body of work conveyed through video, sound, graphic and textual components, I isolate inferential elements that, while omnipresent, elude attention. I am interested in conditions of quasi-immobility and I attempt to create intersections between the gestures and voice of one body and those of its neighbors (human beings or machines). My work reveals gaps and failures inherent to these tuning exercises. I am interested in the relationship that can be established between a cited author and what is either emphasized or ignored in studying their work.

SEE YOU LATER / AU REVOIR : 17 MINUTES EN TEMPS RÉEL

Video projection, sound, 17 min., 2008

The video being studied here is *See you later / Au revoir* (1990) by Michael Snow in which a 30 second pan shot of a man leaving his office was slowed down to 17 minutes. In a performance for the camera, the scene is reenacted in slowed down real time.

EXPLORE

- sound and its materiality
- notions of duration, mobility, physicality, and theatricality and how they function and interact in this work

THÉRÈSE MASTROIACOVO

Thérèse Mastroiacovo's work is about art itself as an idea, artistic process itself as methodology. It is about the precarious relationship art has to its own definition, open, half open, or slightly open for re-classification at any given time. The varying degrees of openness create space in-between, a space that gives way to meanderings, processes, and procedures.

UNTITLED (WILLIAM WEGMAN)

Single channel video on monitor, sound. 58 sec., 2001

VIEWING FROM A SINGLE VANTAGE POINT (FIGURE 108)

Graphite on paper, 2007–2008

VIEWING FROM A SINGLE VANTAGE POINT (FIGURE 20)

Graphite on paper, 2007–2008

VIEWING FROM A SINGLE VANTAGE POINT (FIGURE 29)

Graphite on paper, 2008

VIEWING FROM A SINGLE VANTAGE POINT (FIGURE 120)

Graphite on paper, 2008

Thérèse Mastroiacovo presents a series of drawings and a video work, each piece re-working an artwork from the past. From this variety of disciplines emerges the commonality of looking from one pers-

pective, the singular view of the document reactivated by a process of review.

EXPLORE

- the reactualization of conceptual works through labour-intensive graphite drawings
- perspective or point of view and how this notion is explored in Mastroiacovo's reworkings

DAMIAN MOPPETT

Damian Moppett creates work that questions notions of "quality" and concepts of "mastery" in art by attempting to avoid traditional aesthetic and conceptual criteria by which artistic techniques and proficiency are judged. Moppett's work is heavily referential (in both form and content), analytical, and often brutally conceptual.

For the works exhibited here, Moppett uses drawing and watercolour not only to produce aesthetic objects, but also as a literal means to represent his cultural influences and to show how their subject matter has affected his artistic production.

For a full description of the fifteen works on paper exhibited, please see our website: http://ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/reflexion_filiations_moppett.php#contenu

EXPLORE

- the idea of "mastery" in relation to identification as an interdisciplinary artist
- the ways in which Moppett constructs a personal art history through selecting, re-imagining, and assembling historical moments, individuals, and artefacts

DANIEL OLSON

My practice consists primarily of exploratory reactions to and manipulations of elements culled from a variety of sources: personal history, popular culture and daily life; the histories and technologies of art, film, photography and music; the fields of literature, philosophy, mathematics and language(s). These explorations feed the production of an eclectic, interconnected body of work, with projects manifested as installations, multiple and unique objects, artist's books, photographs, video and audio works, and performances.

RUBBER BALL[S]

Single channel video on monitor, sound, 40 min., 2001

Rubber Ball[s] is a video in which I sit at a desk with a ball made from elastic bands, which I dismantle one elastic at

a time, simultaneously making a new ball with the elastics removed from the original one. The piece is dedicated to David Askevold, many of whose early film and video works depict him performing idiosyncratic actions in front of a stationary camera.

12!

set of 12 plates from toy xylophones, box, printed card, foam, 1996

12! is a multiple that introduces the mathematical concept of factorials: the factorial of a given integer n is $1 \times 2 \times 3 \times \dots \times n$, written as $n!$, and gives the number of ways n things can be arranged in sequence. By throwing the twelve metal plates onto a hard surface one would play a twelve-note melody; according to the concept of factorials there are 12!, or 479,001,600 different possible melodies that can be played.

EXPLORE

- the ways in which Olson examines the suggestion of complex possibilities in his work
- the relationship between video camera, performer, and action

PAVEL PAVLOV

Landscape is the central theme in my work. I am interested in the tension that exists between its layered contextual structure and its unity as an image delimited by a frame. My approach is anchored in minimalist conceptual practices of the 60s and 70s. Rather than producing unique images I produce series in which, similarly to assembly lines, each image exists in relation to both the previous one and the one that follows. I consider my visual propositions to be like machines that reconstitute real space through the simultaneous perception of multiple points of view.

PROJET POUR UN PANORAMA

FRAGMENTÉ DE LA POINTE

SAINT-CHARLES À MONTRÉAL

Two channel video installation, 8 min. loop, 2008

The traditional panorama frequently commemorates an historic event by creating a 360 degree pictorial fiction. In *Projet pour un panorama fragmenté de la Pointe Saint-Charles à Montréal* (2008), two video cameras trace a geometric form that functions as a monument to an industrial site and its invisible history (in 1847, thousands of Irish immigrants infected with typhus were hospitalized and then buried here; in 1967, this was the site of the Expo 67 Autostade).

EXPLORE

- the nature of Pavlov's use of multiple points of view and how they mediate the landscape being documented

→ notions of history: how they are embedded in a site and the ways in which they are or can be revealed

CHARLES STANKIEVECH

Charles Stankievech works in the constellation of art, architecture and sound. Balancing philosophical questioning with explorations of materiality, his work combines a subtle play between the history of ideas and the history of technologies.

UNTITLED (MARCH 24TH)

Postcard, offset print on paper, edition of 1000, 2008

An edition of 1000 postcards that visitors are free to take. On the back of each postcard is a web address where sound can be downloaded.

GET OUT OF MY HEAD.

GET OUT OF MY MIND.

Stereo audio for wireless headphones, 6 min. loop, 2008

I have re-performed Bruce Nauman's *Get Out Of My Mind. Get Out Of This Room.* (1968) and re-mixed it for wireless headphones. Unlike the original, *Get Out Of My Head. Get Out Of My Mind.* (2008) denies architecture and explores the unique relation between virtual space and psychotopology.

EXPLORE

- the use of headphones and the specificity of the aural space or environment that they create
- the juxtaposition of image and virtual sound and how this contributes to what is revealed and what is concealed

CHIH-CHIEN WANG

My work focusses on the experience of daily life. I use video and photography to present the various textures of life, including concerns surrounding the urban environment and cultural difference.

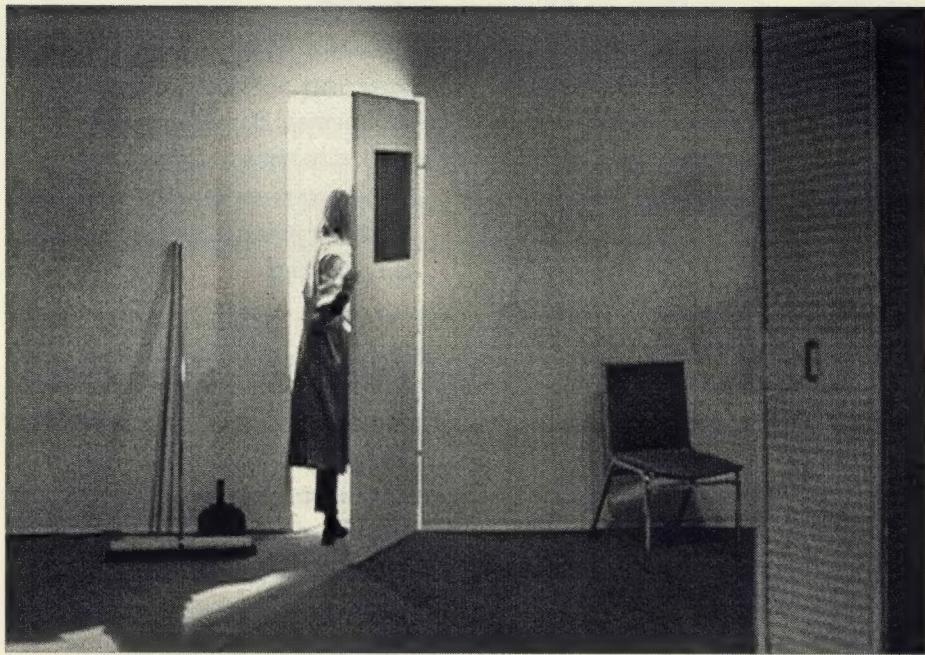
100 FIGHTS

C prints, 2008

Lying on the same bed, we cannot turn to each other. We avoid looking into each other's eyes, we avoid smelling each other's breath, and we avoid each other's warmth. We keep looking at our wall, the wall in front of each one of us.

EXPLORE

- notions of placement, surrounding, and repetition and how these are conveyed or depicted
- the ways in which the personal, human contact, and human interaction are explored



Sophie Bélair Clément, *See you later / Au revoir : 17 minutes en temps réel*, video still, 2008.
Courtesy of the artist.

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